

REMARKS

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough examination of the application. English translations of the priority documents are being filed concurrently with this Amendment. The specification has been amended to improve the format of the subject headings.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-3 and 5-15 are pending in the application. Claim 4 has been canceled by this Amendment. Claims 1 and 6 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of canceled claim 4. Claims 2, 3 and 5 have been amended to improve their antecedent basis without reducing their scope. Support for claim 7 can be found at page 7, lines 7-12 of the specification. Support for claims 8 and 9 can be found at page 11, lines 14-18 of the specification. Support for claim 10 can be found at page 12, lines 8-12 of the specification. Support for claim 11 can be found at page 13, lines 6-9 of the specification. Support for claims 12-15 can be found at page 16, lines 4-13 of the specification.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 2 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Regarding claim 2, the Examiner's comments have been considered. Claim 2 as amended, has full antecedent basis.

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that claim 4 is indefinite because it refers to two separate chambers. However, claim 4 is definite based upon the disclosure of Figure 1 and the discussion at page 17 of the application. This disclosure discusses an accommodation chamber 12 inside a gas generating agent combustion chamber 20, and reducing materials placed in the proximity of a gas outlet 18. As a result, claim 4 is clear in light of the disclosure.

As a result, the claims as amended are clear, definite and have full antecedent basis. This rejection is accordingly overcome and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) Over Iwai

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Iwai (U.S. Patent No. 6,540,256). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Iwai was filed on December 11, 1998. The priority documents JP 10-109432, JP 10-170860, and JP 10-320269 were filed on April 20, 1998, June 18, 1998 and November 11, 1998, respectively. In order to perfect priority, English translations of the aforesaid priority documents are being filed concurrently with this paper. As a result, Iwai is removed as prior art.

Additionally, Iwai has common ownership with the instant application, both being assigned to Daicel Chemical Industries, Ltd.

This rejection is overcome and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) Over Katsuda

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Katsuda (U.S. Patent No. 6,234,521). Applicants respectfully traverse.

The Present Invention and Its Advantages

The present invention pertains to an airbag inflator that helps reduce the amount of NOx generated by the combustion of a gas generating agent. The present invention finds a typical embodiment in instant claim 1:

An inflator comprising a gas generating agent, a reducing material, an ignition means, and a coolant/filter, wherein said reducing material is placed in the proximity of a gas outlet from an ignition means accommodation chamber inside a gas generating agent combustion chamber.

An important aspect of the invention is utilizing a partition plate to prevent change or variance in the NOx reducing effect (See claim 3).

Distinctions of the Invention over Katsuda

Katsuda pertains to an airbag inflator in an airbag apparatus. Figure 1 of Katsuda shows a housing 3 and ignition device accommodating chamber 17, a central cylinder chamber 4, a support plate 24, a gas generating material 25 and a coolant/filter 5.

Katsuda fails to disclose an ignition means accommodation chamber inside a gas generating agent combustion chamber, such as is set forth in claims 1 and 6 of the invention. Katsuda thus fails to anticipate the invention set forth in

independent claims 1 and 6. Claims dependent upon claims 1 and 6 are patentable for at least the above reasons.

This rejection is overcome and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the Information Disclosure Statement filed September 30, 2003 and for making initialed sheet 1 of the PTO-1449 form of record in the application in the Office Action mailed March 4, 2004. However, sheet 2 of the Information Disclosure Statement PTO-1449 form was not appended to the Office Action. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to consider sheet 2 of the PTO-1449 form and to make it of record in the next official action. For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of sheet 2 of the PTO-1449 form is attached to this paper.

Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert E. Goozner, Ph.D. (Reg. No. 42,593) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Amendment filed June 4, 2004
Response to Office Action of March 4, 2004

Appl. No. 10/673,419
Group: 3641

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By Robert E. Goosner #42,593
for Raymond C. Stewart #21,066


RCS/REG:jls
0425-1080P

P. O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

Attachment(s): Three (3) English language translations of priority documents
Sheet 2 of PTO-1449 forms dated September 30, 2003

(Rev. 02/12/2004)